Closure of research centre of CIFT

162. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Research Centre of Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) established at Hirakud Dam Project in 1963, was found fit to be closed down.

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether, on the request of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Orissa, he reviewed the matter and agreed to continue the same during his visit to Orissa in July, 2009; and

(d) if so, by when formal orders on the subject are proposed to be issued?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Research Centre had accomplished its targeted mandate.

(c) and (d) The Centre is continuing and the matter is sub-judice.

Financial assistance to drought hit districts

163. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received proposals to declare a large number of districts as drought hit from various States;

(b) whether Government has sent any Central team to each of such districts in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the name of districts in various States so far declared as drought hit districts;

(d) the details of assistance requested by various States to such affected districts, State-wise; and

(e) the details of assistance Government has provided to each of such districts so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) It is within the State Government's domain to declare areas as affected by drought. During South-West Monsoon 2009,12 States have declared drought/ drought like/scarcity conditions.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Inter-Ministerial Central Teams were deputed to all the 12 drought affected States to visit the affected districts, as per programme drawn in consultation with the States. The State-wise details of districts declared as drought affected is given in the enclosed Statement-I. [Refer to the Statement appended to the Answer to USQ No. 157 Part (a), (b) and (c).]

(d) and (e) Central Government provides assistance directly to the State Govenment. A Statement showing the details of financial assistance sought by the State Governments to deal with the drought and the assistance granted under NCCF is given in the enclosed Statement-II. [Refer to the statement appended to the Answer to USQ No. 157 Part (a), (b) and (c).]

Subsidy to coconut growing farmers

164. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a demand from State Government of Kerala to give subsidy on the coconut oil to help the farmers;

(b) the steps which have so far been taken by Government on this demand; and

(c) whether the Central Government intends to give subsidy on coconut oil to help the coconut farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As informed by Department of Food & Public Distribution, the subsidy on edible oils in the Scheme implemented by the Central Government for distribution through State/Union Territories is confined to imported oil. The purpose of the Scheme is primarily to augment domestic availability through imports and thereby to keep domestic prices of edible oils under control. There is no provision to give subsidy to indigenous oils including coconut oil.

Damage to crops in Himachal Pradesh

165. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the fact that apple, chilgoza and other cash crops like peas and zeera are being hit hard by dust, aerosols and environmental pollution wrecked by hydro projects in Himachal Pradesh due to which farmers are bearing great losses and becoming indebted;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government proposes to take up the matter with concerned authority to give farmers compensation for their losses; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, the attention of the Government has been drawn to the loss of apple crop of three, farmers in VPO Radi Development Block Mehla in District Chamba hit by dust, aerosols and environmental pollution created by blasting and constructions activities in Chamera Hydro Electric Project Phase-3 in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh. However, there is no report of losses to the crop of Chilgoza and other cash crops like pea, etc.